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*d*ESIGNING URBAN RENEWAL: SHIFTING BETWEEN PLAN AND PROJECT

ABSTRACT

Discussions on city transformations over the last twenty years have been based on the unreasonable rivalry between urban plans and projects. Regarding some remarkable experiments of the twentieth century – Plan Obus for Algiers, Le Corbusier (1929-30), and the Metabolist superstructures in Japan (1960) – and supported by authors focused on urban contemporaneity, this paper suggests the reconciliation of these two instances of propositional thinking about contemporary cities.

Urban planning and urban design are described as complementary aspects of the same process of facing urban issues, since a guideline between reflection and action in the city is identified. The need of an urban holder is exposed; a support tough enough to keep the set of interventions under the same horizon of meaning and flexible enough to be shaped by the interventions themselves and to be transformed by advances in production systems. That holder shall be a result of the collective desires of a society and, at the same time, recognized as part of the authorial design of planners.

It is about speculations on the scale of action of urbanism, taking into account the contemporary reality of São Paulo. Plans and urban planning instruments in use – and others no longer valid – define the boundaries of this paper, and trigger an early discussion of the possibilities and necessities of performance in the built environment of this great city, offering field for thought which realigns plans and projects. Therefore it is an attempt to break the historical split between two professional activity areas that should be reconciled as one same process.

KEYWORDS

Urban planning. Urban design. São Paulo. Plan Obus. Metabolism. Contemporary urbanism

EL DISEÑO DEL SOPORTE DE LA RENOVACIÓN URBANA: TRÁNSITOS ENTRE PLAN Y PROYECTO

RESUMEN

La falsa rivalidad entre los planes y los proyectos urbanos pautó las discusiones sobre la transformación de las ciudades, durante los últimos 20 años. A la luz de experimentos notables del siglo 20 – el Plan Obus para Argel, Le Corbusier (1929-1930) y las superestructuras metabolistas japonesas (1960) – y pautado por autores concentrados en la contemporaneidad urbanística, este artículo sugiere caminos posibles para la conciliación de las dos instancias propositivas en las ciudades de hoy.

Plan y proyecto urbano se describen como aspectos complementarios de un mismo proceso, que hace frente a los problemas urbanos, desde la identificación de un hilo conductor entre la reflexión y la acción en la ciudad. Se ha descrito la necesidad de un soporte urbano suficientemente rígido, para mantener el conjunto de intervenciones dentro de un horizonte que tenga sentido, y suficientemente flexible, para absorber los cambios requeridos por las mismas intervenciones y aquellas inherentes a los avances de los sistemas productivos. Un soporte que sea fruto de los deseos colectivos de la sociedad, pero que se reconoce como resultado del deseo de autoría de los urbanistas.

Se presentan especulaciones sobre la escala de actuación del Urbanismo, con desdoblamientos en la condición contemporánea de la realidad de São Paulo. Planes e instrumentos urbanísticos en vigor – y otros ya superados – delimitan el recorte de lectura de ese ensayo y desencadenan una discusión inicial sobre las posibilidades y necesidades de actuación en el ambiente construido de esta gran ciudad, proponiendo un espacio de reflexión que recoloca en línea planes y proyectos. Por lo tanto se presenta como un intento de romper la división histórica entre dos campos de actividad profesional, que deben conciliarse, como dos brazos de un mismo proceso.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Plan urbanístico. Proyecto urbano. São Paulo. Plan Obus. Metabolismo. Urbanismo contemporáneo.

O DESENHO DO SUPORTE DA RENOVAÇÃO URBANA: TRÁNSITOS ENTRE PLANO E PROJETO

RESUMO

A falsa concorrência entre planos e projetos urbanos pautou a discussão sobre a transformação das cidades, durante os últimos 20 anos. À luz de notáveis experiências do século 20 – o Plano Obus para Argel, Le Corbusier (1929-30) e as superestruturas metabolistas japonesas (anos 1960) – e pautado por autores focados na contemporaneidade urbanística, este ensaio sugere caminhos possíveis para a conciliação das duas instâncias de pensamento propositivo nas cidades atuais.

Plano e projeto urbano são descritos como faces complementares do mesmo processo de enfrentamento das questões urbanas, a partir da identificação de uma linha condutora entre reflexão e intervenção na cidade. Descreve-se a necessidade de um suporte urbano suficientemente rígido, para manter um horizonte de sentido ao conjunto de intervenções, e suficientemente maleável, para resistir às transformações impostas pelas próprias intervenções e por aquelas inerentes aos avanços dos sistemas produtivos. Um suporte que seja fruto dos desejos coletivos da sociedade, mas que se reconheça como peça tributária do desejo autoral dos urbanistas.

Trata-se de um conjunto de especulações sobre a escala de atuação do Urbanismo, com desdobramentos na condição contemporânea da realidade paulistana. Planos e instrumentos urbanísticos em vigência – e outros já superados – delimitam o recorte da leitura deste ensaio e disparam um início de discussão sobre as possibilidades e necessidades de atuação no ambiente construído desta grande cidade, propondo um espaço de reflexão que recoloca em consonância planos e projetos. Apresenta-se, portanto, uma tentativa de rompimento da cisão histórica entre dois campos de atuação profissional que deveriam se conciliar como braços de um único processo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Plano urbanístico. Projeto urbanístico. São Paulo. Plano Obus, Metabolismo. Urbanismo contemporâneo.

This essay proposes a reflection on the rivalry between urban plans and projects, recapturing propositional concepts of the 20th century that point to the interdependent existence of both instances.

The plan, functioning as support, a rigorous superstructure that accepts transformations of its changeable element: the design project. This concept represents a way out of the impasse of current urban planning crisis (1980s/1990s) – defended by many authors –, inasmuch as it represents the condensation of efforts to overcome the excesses of the Modernist total plan, and the phenomenological bias that took over urban diagnoses thereafter. A type of contemporary reconciliation between the formal logic of construction of space (urbs), and logic related to space occupation and its users (civitas): the healthy conclusion that the city is composed of these two elements. (SECCHI, 1989)

Modernity had, as premises, the reach of equality, the creation of a city-machine, capable of uniformly meet the demands of its citizens, with urban plans designed as fixed equations of invariable factors. As celebration of industrialization, urbanism focused on the creation of serial spaces, and on the belief that excellence in manufacturing would suffice to meet the needs of an increasingly larger urban population. Modern revisionism, on its turn – in view of the evident failure of the model it opposed to –, decelerated engines and the automation processes, and ended up by finding comfortable accommodation in the theoretical field. All products could be questioned in advance: the creative agents and users, the physical elements of their morphological constitution, each one understood in its specific conditions and particular universe of demand. As in all cycles of art history, radicalization of original ideas led to an also exaggerated counterpoint: hypothesis and antithesis of a same formulation. Until a new synthesis is found that gives rise to a new creative period.

The generic machine, in opposition to the denial of the machine, through the assertion of human peculiarity, appears to be the single line describing the twentieth century urbanism, in an antagonism that reaches the limit of exhaustion in the 1980s. The period, coinciding with systemic transformations of the dominating capitalism, experiences evidences that the complexity of urban societies cannot meet detailed individual demands, while it is not, at the same time, duly faced through totalizing generic solutions. In other words, the heterogeneity and fragmentation are conditions of contemporaneity that Urbanism must consider as working data, and not as hindrances to its action.

This impasse delineates what has materialized as urban crisis, described by authors such as Bernardo Secchi¹, who presents a quite didactic metaphor to illustrate the situation. The author recovers the image of the driving machine, and associates it to urban planning functions. The machine, as a mechanical artifact, repeatedly realizes preset processes as long as operated correctly; the constancy of results, however, has no interest to the construction of the city, as social demands – inputs that must feed the machine – are multiple and transformed according to several conditions. Urbanism must function as a machine that creates plans (seen as images of the future of the city, schedules for interventions, distribution of responsibilities among the several actors of the production of space, set of rules, and a pact between society and

administration); these products will have an impact on the city and, thus, on society, and will generate new inputs (demands) that will finally be reabsorbed by the machine in the process of generation of new products (and renewed city transformations). (SECCHI, 2006)

This perpetual motion overcomes, theoretically, the crisis, inasmuch as it soothes the seeming contradiction between the regulation provided by the machine, and the need for flexibility to which current societies are subjected. The possible path that presents itself today, in view of that interpretation, can be described, superficially, in the two complementing and parallel scenarios on the disciplinary unfold of urban plans and projects, presented below. It is necessary to continue with the contextualization of those processes in their chronological aspects and, mainly in their derivations in the São Paulo context, as an attempt to describe a brief hypothesis for contemporary coexistence of plan and project.

THREE GENERATIONS OF URBAN PLANS

² CAMPOS VENUTTI, Giuseppe. *La terza generazione dell'urbanistica*. Milan: Franco Angeli, 1989, p. 41.

³ The third generation described by Campos Venutti appears in the 1980's, which places us in a period of consequences of the procedures initiated then, perhaps not yet described or duly analyzed.

Giuseppe Campos Venutti² presented to the European landscape of the second half of the twentieth century a generational reading of urban plans that synthesizes the general goals of each stage of the proposals. According to the author, the first generation have produced generic instruments, fruit of a desire to impose control on the chaos of urban growth, based on proposals of road and traffic restructuring, accompanied by incentives to increase the density of occupation (in line with political interest of real estate developers). Those are plans of the first context after the Letter of Athens, stressed by the illusion of a demand for reconstruction after World War II, which had its peak (in Italy) during the 1950s.

The plans of the second generation (1960s and 1970s) are expansionist, foreseeing the growth of cities, and focusing on regulation it, even though without imposing limits. Concerns with real estate pathologies and with social elements of the city appear for the first time.

The third generation – of which we are legitimate children – starts with the understanding that human action on the territory and, mainly, its impacts on the natural environment, must be controlled. The central theme of contemporary plans is, thus, urban transformation and the imposing of restrictions and regulations to its expansion.³ However in the origin of this new attitude there is the change of the productive matrix of large cities, which today, depend, basically, on the third sector. The deindustrialization in large scale and the need to transform large areas of the city have guided the interventions in the last 30 years.

Among the issues that emerged in the passage from the culture of expansion to the culture of transformation, it is precisely the renewed confrontation with the existing city that reignites the interest in urban forms. For, beyond trends and manicheistic oppositions between form and function, the morphology of urban fabrics becomes, once again, an important element of urban quality and of the social and economic use of the city. (VENUTTI, 1989, p. 42, our translation)

⁴ PORTAS, Nuno. Interpretazioni del progetto urbano. L'emergenza del progetto urbano. *Urbanistica*, n. 110, June 1998.

The division in periods proposed by the author is conditioned by events that happened in the European cities, mainly the Italian ones; but it can also, with caution, be transported to the experience of the city of São Paulo. In the first decades of the twentieth century, urban activity in the city of São Paulo was based on keen proximity between public agents and large infrastructure companies, as well as on plans and actions that have created new areas and vectors of expansion, (Plan of Improvements 1916, Plan of Avenues 1939). Urban planning in the 1960s and 1970s has incorporated some of the second generation concerns (according to Campos Venuti), mainly regarding regulations of the expansion areas, and control of the action of the real estate market, leading up to the creation of the Integrated Development Land-Use Plan (PPDI), and the Zoning Law 1972. Lastly, the third generation has created, as its first effective product in São Paulo, the Strategic Master Plan 2002, in which constraints to an uncontrolled expansion, and mainly, an attempt to restrain the impact on the environment (with the creation of macro-zones of protection and special protection zones) are the items highlighted in this comparison, and which are still present in the current review of the Master Plan 2014.

THREE GENERATIONS OF URBAN PROJECTS

Nuno Portas⁴ is the one conducting the generational presentation of the urban projects in this article. He linearizes a sequence of experiences, starting from mid-twentieth century, in a periodization parallel to that of Campos Venutti and, to some extent, complementary to it. The reading is ordered according to the identification of the role of the architect in defining proposals, and to the action of the government as fomenting agent in each period.

The first generation of urban projects accounts for “*unitary architecture’s projects of considerable dimensions, aiming at representing – despite their own physical limits – the exemplary form of the modern city*”. In this category, there are the large-scale-proposals of the Metabolists, of the Smithson couple, of Vittorio Gregotti, brought to light by Team X’s positioning, as opposed to an “*ambitious – even though grayish – post-war urbanism of the assistance-based states*” (PORTAS, 1998, p. 51).

The fiscal crisis of 1970s marks the beginning of the second generation of urban projects, which induced the option of special projects, usually state-funded and in the municipal sphere. “*Those projects preserve Architectural authorship as identification sign; nonetheless they are inserted in preexisting urban tissues.*” If, on the one side, the first generation sought for large-scale operation mechanisms and the creation of new sectors, the second was rooted in typological criticism of regionalism, betting on selective intervention, and attentive to the existing city. Oriol Bohigas’ Olympic Barcelona (1985-92), La Villete by Bernard Tschumi (1987), or the reconstruction of the Chiado by Álvaro Siza (1989) represent, according to Portas, some of the highlights of this generation, in line with “*investments in typology and in the language of the built structure, and, at the same time, in the creation of a collective space connected with the surrounding morphology that delimits it*”. (PORTAS, 1998, p. 52)

The third generation of urban projects was organized without distinctions of scale or type of intervention as did the second one, while still keeping the architect's prominence; it differs in its processes and mechanisms, programs and new intervention opportunities. Design projects started to be developed in a "*biunique and non-hierarchical*" positioning regarding the urban plan, that is, they became the outcome of a planning package, such as in the clear examples of London Docklands' recovery, in the 1980s and the 1990s.

The general context therefore presents a broad condition for urban renovation, based on a relationship of engagement and interaction between planning and designing projects of urban Architecture. This definition is understandable and acceptable, but certainly incapable of facing the organic complexity that is the city of São Paulo. To what extent should the prominence of the architect's design (in the role of author of projects) be considered in the equation of construction (or renovation) of cities such as this one?

Portas' description of the third generation of urban projects presumes the participation of the public power as mediator, the needed partner, inasmuch as the plan and the project contaminate themselves with one another: the plan is a public initiative, inevitably. However, the design projects endowed with such potential are, in effect, the large-scale ones, and those which, even with private funding, must meet the guidance (whichever it may be) of public regulations.

But the city is not made exclusively of large projects, urban projects that relate to the plans transforming them. On the contrary, the city is built by a constellation of isolated interventions, alien to urban planning (except regarding land and occupation use and regulations). Resuming to my point: to what extent should the prominence of the architect's design be considered a defining factor in the equation of the city's production?

Nuno Portas himself⁵ outlines what we present here as indication of a possible answer. In reference to the American experience of the eighteenth century (Philadelphia, Chicago, and New York), he affirms that the goal of urbanism is to "*ensure, with its formal rigidity, a stable reverence dimension*", playing a figurative role in urban morphology, independent of interventions of architectonic objects. It is about, thus, a perennial but adaptable support ("*object-holder network*") (PORTAS, 1969, p. 94).

There are two fronts of considerations to highlight in this statement. The first comes from the notion of formal rigidity, which suggests a natural pressure from society for diversity; it moves forward on a desirable independence between architectonic objects and their matrix, inasmuch as it is capable of allowing for diversity in a safe context. The second brings forward the notion of stable reverence, the search for the nature of social representation, that is, urbanism in its symbolical value, as an original (and recognizable) element of urban morphology. In both cases, the organization of the city's space starts to consider time, as a participant in its conformation, demanding, from the formally-rigid figure, the ability to keep itself whole and recognizable, regardless of the inexorable transformations of its secondary elements.⁶

⁵ PORTAS, Nuno. *A cidade como arquitetura*. Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 1969.

⁶ See TÁVORA, Fernando. *Da organização do espaço*. Porto: FAUP Publications, 2004.

FORMAL RIGIDITY (OR OBJECT-HOLDER NETWORK)

Let's take the same example presented by the author: Le Corbusier's *Plan Obus* for Algiers (1929-30). Portas compares it, in essence, with American Urbanism of the end of nineteenth century, describing it as the logic supporting the development of diversity. His remarks coincide with Manfredo Tafuri's⁷ who describes the plan as following:

[...] to absorb that multiplicity, to mediate the improbable with the certainty of the plan, to compensate organicity and de-organicity, stressing the dialectics between them, to demonstrate that the highest level of productive planning coincides with the maximum "productivity of the spirit" (TAFURI, 1985, p. 86).

Algiers' serpentine was, in anticipation, the condensation of the ideals of modern Urbanism and of its criticism, it is the construction of new and controlled ground – dear to the modernists –, and the permission to the diversity of individual action – required by the revisionists of the 1960. "The architect is an organizer, not a draftsman of objects", should be the motto of Le Corbusier (TAFURI, 1985, p. 86).

To organize the space for the inexorable changes in production, to consider the likely scenario of isolated transformations in the production of the city without losing sight of the collective horizon that keeps it in some kind of order. The Obus Plan is rigorously explicit regarding its intention when it introduces a design proposition which, in addition to anticipating the obsolescence of the logic of architectonic *standard*⁸, inserts urban intervention as a possibility of regional planning, going beyond the plot/neighborhood/city sequence. At the same time, the superstructure regulates interventions of plan and project, going from local action to the understanding of the city in its broader dimension, covering districts individually. It also subverts the logic of land ownership, detaching the individual plot from the land – just as we would see, years later, in Brasília, in its own way.

The relationship between Architecture and Urbanism is taken to a new degree, repositioning functions in the construction of the formal logic of the city. The architectonic object – up to that point considered the ideological realization of plans – is now subverted into the reality of the plan; the responsibility for the construction of a formal representation of industrial society (*civilisation machiniste*) is transposed to a new level of action, the superstructure-plan, while Architecture frees itself to the action of the most varied individual manifestations⁹.

Here, it seems appropriate to give another example. The Japanese Metabolism of the 1960s and 1970s takes on a similar path, with proposals of megastructures originally defined as notable references in the urban landscape, landmarks that gather all portions of the city's autonomous processes in themselves. The movement, tributary of the pre-oil crisis' optimism and the explosion of Japanese technology, sought for a scale of intervention which suffices to put the action of urban design in level of equality with road infrastructures, which, by then, already dominated the landscapes of big cities. The consolidation of a milestone is the goal anticipated in the first descriptions of the Metabolists' projects, in line with

⁷ TAFURI, Manfredo. *Projecto e utopia*. Lisbon: Editorial Presença, 1985.

⁸ Tafuri specifically mentions surpassing the logic of German rationalism, mainly the standardization of experiences of Bruno Taut, Ernst May and Walter Gropius.

⁹ "‘Liberty’ given to the public must be fomented to the point of permitting the public itself [...] the explanation of its ‘bad taste’. Thus, architecture as pedagogical act and instrument of collective integration" (TAFURI, op. cit., p. 90).

their intention to regulate the diverse isolated interventions, based on an original designed axis.

Kenzo Tange's plan for Tokyo Bay (1960) can be taken as a unique example; it praised men's domination over nature with the construction of a powerful system of infrastructures. Elevated roads, connections in several levels, telecommunication and sanitation systems, all this, metaphorically designs the foundation of the city that claims to stand over the water.

New inhabitable area was proposed, through an operation at the same time technical – the building of functional urban foundations – and aesthetic –, expressed in a notable intervention gesture over previously inaccessible body of water. Following this intervention, the city is built, with the coupling of individual parts (buildings), randomly installed in the fixed network. Just like in Eugène Hennard or Harvey Wiley Corbett's fantasies¹⁰, the generic (multiple) city develops itself on top of a perennial and recognizable basis.

STABLE REFERENCE (URBANISM OF SYMBOLICAL REPRESENTATION)

In those two examples, despite the three decades separating them, referring to design, a single strategy is noted: authorship of the recognizable piece, the human artifact that becomes a landmark, is anticipated in the process of regional planning, that is, the explicit authorship of human desire starts to be attributed to the urbanist, rather than to the architect who will be in charge of the buildings (whether it is possible to make any professional distinction between them).¹¹

Without going into psychoanalytical assumptions about Le Corbusier's character, it would be at least uncomfortable to affirm that he would have waved drawings' authorship; it seems fairer to think, to be more accurate, that there is a change in scale in the definition of his spatial intentions.

At this point, the discussion about authorship is interesting inasmuch as it sheds light on the convergence between plan and project. Bernardo Secchi brings forth proper considerations when talking about composure. "*Composure supposes conventions and self-limitations; it is the opposite of an expressionist attitude*" (SECCHI, 2006, p. 121), something that can keep authorship decisions in a safe and reliable universe, which looks, in implicit conventions, for the possibility of acknowledgment of the several parts of a whole. Secchi approaches the topic once again when defining what he calls the "*city design project*", a set of non-described intentions but that nonetheless, in a way or another, outlines the urban setting inside a certain "*horizon of meaning*"¹².

The search for a palette of certainties (accepted by some sort of common sense) aims at building a working field in which a sequence of individual decisions does not represent risk of rupture of an order implicit in the formation of the city. This concern is quite understandable; one can see that cities of historical occupation, due to a series of circumstances, keep a recognizable global formation despite centuries of transformations. It is an attempt to put into perspective the responsibilities of intervention projects, attributing to the very existence of the city the duty to guide the decisions. It

¹⁰ Contemporary investigations (end of the nineteenth century) that foresaw dense and active cities (Paris and Chicago), built on a complex network of mobility and sanitation infrastructure.

¹¹ In this point it is worth resuming Manfredo Tafuri's interpretation about the Obus Plan: "*The ideology of the form seems to abandon its positivist dialectics of the bourgeois culture. Without abandoning the 'project utopia', the resumption against the processes that concretely surpass the level of the ideology is attempted in the recovery from the chaos, in the contemplation that the Constructivism seemed to have done away with forever [...]. Having gotten to an unquestionable stalemate, the architectonic ideology renounces performing a driving role for the city and the production structures, hiding behind a rediscovery of the disciplinary autonomy or of neurotic self-destructive attitudes.*" (TAFURI, op. cit., p. 93).

¹² Secchi resorts to Igor Stravinsky, quoting a speech which defines composure as a "*form of convention that may contain music within rigorous terms and prevent it from dispersing by an author's frequently dangerous rambling*", and concludes relating this disposition to the trend of being guided by the values of the tradition: "*the true tradition is not a witness of an already finished past, but rather the living force that stimulates and informs the present about it*". Igor Stravinsky, apud SECCHI, op. cit., p. 119.

¹³Contemporary architecture has produced examples which follow the same logic, similar to some experiences of the Chilean Elemental collective, led by Architect Alejandro Aravena, with projects such as the housing compounds of Quinta Monroy, in Iquique (Chile) and in Monterrey (Mexico), in which the matrix offered to the users already foresee expansion and adaptation interventions, which will transform the initial collective object into a palette of individual tastes.

is almost like Michelangelo's statement that David already existed inside the marble block, that he himself had only performed the task of removing the stones around him.

Even Architecture has undergone cycles of search for the subversion of authorship, by means of defining supposedly safe methodologies, within the logic of choice of unquestionable public certainties. Brazilian Modern Architecture has arisen from an argument of such nature, linking it to the Baroque tradition as a way of ensuring some critical certainty. Lucio Costa, in his initial pamphleteering manifestations, has built the myth of origin of our Modern Architecture, linking it to a vernacular matrix in order to justify the option for that path as the only option truly aligned with the historical process. Oscar Niemeyer – who was first his theoretical disciple – kept for a long time a projective discourse, organized through references to the Brazilian Baroque Architecture (balconies, edges of roofs, etc.), later corroborated by the international critique.

In the work of these two architects, tradition is held as a safety flag, an element of connection to an implicit logic which lends meaning to the proposed innovations. The perception of a broader context defines a set of rules that pacifies decision making and legitimates individual actions. To reach this matching capacity thus demands proper interpretation of the rules and, therefore, clarity regarding the common “*horizon of meaning*” which is valid for those willing to work on it.

Taking into consideration the differences in scale, it is possible to consider that both Le Corbusier and Kenzo Tange have turned that “*horizon of meaning*” into something concrete, through designing the rule of composure for the interventions they could not control¹³. They ensure the consolidation of a symbolic and perennial whole, while allowing the development of adaptations – whether they might come from the action of formal individualities, or from cyclic transformations motivated by changes in the broader productive scenario.

SÃO PAULO: PLAN AND PROJECT

“Le Corbusier formulates [Obus Plan] the higher theoretical hypothesis of modern urbanistic, still unsurpassed both regarding form and ideology.” (TAFURI, 1985, p. 87).

There is still the attempt to take it as such, as theoretical hypothesis for overcoming the ambivalent competition between plan and project, between Architecture and Urbanism, in its possibility of application in the context that particularly interests us: the city of São Paulo. The first factor to be considered – which perhaps justifies the transposition of ideas – is the construction of a landscape in which the formalizing element has potency to regulate through design (explicit rules), and through moral strength (implicit rules), the set of isolated interventions in the city, or, at least, in part of it, without exclusively depending on the action of the government, condition which must be ruled out as *sine qua non* rule.

Developing on the subject, the question that imposes itself is whether or not we are, in effect, dealing with something that can be called a plan. Or, more precisely, whether the scales of approach Le Corbusier's or Kenzo Tange's proposals deal with are compatible with such denomination. We should not now try to deepen contemporary definitions of plan, but it seems appropriate to suppose that what is being presented to the city of São Paulo as plans, in the last decades, are tools remarkably incapable of approaching the regulations proposed for Algiers or Tokyo.

Of course it is not due to academic or projectual deficiencies, but rather because the plans for São Paulo present a diverse scope. The planning culture in São Paulo have consolidated the scale of diagnosis as synonym for urbanistic work, with the map being the support for the intervention, antagonizing the complementary efforts needed to understand the city¹⁴. The organization of its main instruments has been guided, since the end of the 1960s, by a prevailingly analytical approach, coordinated by Father Lebreton from the Society for the Graphic and Mechanographical Analysis Applied to Social Compounds (SAGMACS). Its continuity can be seen in the 1968 plans (Basic Urbanistic Plan), and in the plans of the following decade: Master Plan of Integrated Development (PDDI), and Metropolitan Plan of Integrated Development (PMDI).

Even in more recent experiences, the Strategic Master Plans (2002 and 2014) continue to be instruments not remarkable for having a propositional bias; the format they were developed and debated (mainly the most recent one) shapes them as part of broader social agreements, attending to multiple demands, mostly conflicting ones regarding the composition of the city; they serve, generally speaking, as norm of consolidation of the existing trends, or as a desire for *macrostructuring* the city. It is possible to affirm, without risk of being frivolous, that those plans do not have as their goal the creation of a drawing for the city, in other words, they do not describe a recognizable "*horizon of meaning*" for São Paulo.

This is, perhaps, the unavoidable consequence of the metropolis' scale, the cost of diversity and acceptance of multiple social demands that form the spectrum of the urban setting. This, however, does not put an end to the question: one must approach the problem, and efforts in this regard are noteworthy. If the scale of the metropolis makes impossible a regulatory action that could create a new global design, one needs to face the challenge in its possible fractions.

Urban operations walk the (tortuous) path towards the creation of an instrument capable of making a coherent intermediation between the actions of the real estate market, and the "*horizon of meaning*" designed by the public power. The intervention plans for the neighborhood, subsidiaries of the Master Plan, also have the potential to define collective intentions, as long as they are considered design instruments with the capability of absorbing sectoral actions demands, and which allows for uniformity in the logic of the intervention. Urban operations and neighborhood plans thus have the responsibility to present themselves as *object-holders* designed as urban artifacts; they must built the collective reference and the recognition of the urban common sense, besides guaranteeing the organic multiplicity of ordinary

¹⁴ Here it is valid to speculate: initially restricted to the context of the School of Architecture and Urbanism of the University of São Paulo, starting in the 1970's, an antagonism between the design (the project) and the construction site (as a personification of exploration of labor processes) – associated with the leaderships of Vilanova Artigas and Sérgio Ferro; in the midst of the crisis of Architecture and, mainly, of Modern Urbanism, this antagonism contaminated and radicalized the discussion about the city, defining opposing and combative positions, having the ones who design and the ones who discuss in opposing sites; project and planning became separate and contradictory matters, restricting the duties of investigation, not of proposal, to planners (in a simplified understanding).

Architecture in a collective context. Perimeters and areas of use are obviously not capable of guiding this process, while large-scale urban design projects are not an option for the transformation of the whole territorial extension of the metropolis of São Paulo.

A remarkable virtue of the two last-mentioned instruments is the possibility of operating based on a design proposal, capable of creating a set of implicit rules (even though registered at first in the design), which guides (at least potentially) sectoral actions and public urban design projects of local scope, besides aligning private action in that same direction, of course. However, only very recently the awareness that urban operations demand a design effort accompanying them has arisen; the recent experiment of the Água Branca Urban Operation is an exciting stimulus in this sense. The neighborhood plans, however, are still waiting for positive news.

In reality, planning has been capable of gradually covering greater diversity of interconnected scales, but has not yet been able to be combined with proper design or an instrument of some sort that guarantees the common direction of the interventions. One has to consider which the proper design support for each scale of reading and proposal is, what kind of Obus serpentine is possible, at each planning stage; there is no question about the need of feedback between plan and project, in the several scales, but the need of a design project in each one of them doesn't seem to be accepted, in effect. Design, as the consolidation of implicit desires, the formalization of collectively-build horizons of meaning; the level of recognition of authorship (personal or collective) is certainly diluted the larger the scale is, and it is conversely acknowledged as urbanistic action of designed support, as it approaches the scale of action.

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